recommended 7 and 13 candidates on the basis of 1996 and 1997 examinations repsectively.

(f) No Sir.

Revision of Pay Scale of Stenographers

2145. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Board of Arbitration have announced an 'Award' in favour of revision of pay scale of Stenographers (Grade-D) in Central Secretariat Services;

(b) whether it is also a fact that during the hearing before the Board both sides are to give their written and oral arguments;

(c) whether action is being taken for implementation of the award;

(d) if so, the likely time to be taken; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and whether they are different from those raised before the Board, alongwith their details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) Action with regard to acceptance/ rejection of the Award is being taken in accordance with the procedure laid down in the JCM scheme. As it also involves studying its impact on other cadres it will be difficult to specify a definite time limit for acceptance/ rejection of the Award.

Vacancies in CBI

2146. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CBI is utterly understaffed and is finding it difficult to cope with the mounting workload;

(b) the number of vacancies which existed within the Organisation as on 31st October, 1998 as also the number of cases pending investigation by CBI on this date;

(c) the steps taken to fill the existing vacancies and by which time these are likely to be filled; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to increase the sanctioned strength of staff in CBI in accordance with the work-load and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) As on October 31, 1998, 787 posts were lying vacant in the CBI and the total of pending Cases was 1808.

(c) Action for filling up has been initiated in respect of more than 700 posts. The various stages reached in the filling up process include circulation of posts, inviting applications, verification of antecedents of selected candidates and issue of appointment letters. Filling up vacant posts in the CBI often involves coordination and consultation with different agencies like UPSC, SSC, State Governments, other Ministries/Organisation etc. and, therefore, it is not possible to give a fixed time frame for it. Orders for the induction of 14 officers in the ranks of SP & above have been issued.

(d) Requests for sanction of additional posts are considered keeping in view the norms for sanction of such posts and the requirements of the Organisation. The Government has sanctioned 106 posts on December 12, 1998 for strengthening the Economic Offences Division and the Special Crimes Division of the CBI.

Instructions for replies to letters of MPs

2147. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether instructions prescribing time limit for sending interim and final replies to letters received by Government Departments from M.Ps exist;

(b) if so, the time limit fixed for interim/ final replies;

(c) whether Government has been calling